CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

FOR several years discriminating readers have found entertainment, instruction and suggestion in the "Portraits" that Gamaliel Bradford has been contributing to the *Atlantic Monthly* and other periodicals. A volume of them, entitled "American Portraits," has just appeared from the press of the Houghton Mifflin Company. The subjects of portraiture are Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Henry Adams, Sidney Lanier, James MacNeill Whistler, James G. Blaine, Grover Cleveland, Henry James and Joseph Jefferson. It would be difficult to improve upon the wording of a publicity note issued by the publishers. It reads: "Mr. Bradford busies himself with the collection of souls. In old, dim corners of dark libraries, in dusty files of newspapers and magazines, in the fleeting triviality of personal correspondence, he hunts for some ray, some gleam, some thread or hint that will lead him to the utmost secrets of a well known character. Then he weaves these threads together, those that are shining and significant, into a solid web of personality that makes the reader feel as if he had stepped into close acquaintance with a friend."

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HERE is a fragment from Mr. Bradford's portrait of Mark Twain: "As he was a creature of contradictions, it is no surprise to find that, while he prayed for boarding houses, he loved comfort and even luxury. He would have eaten off a plank in a mining camp, and slept on one; but the softest beds and the richest tables were never unwelcome, and one attraction of wandering was to see how comfortable men can be as well as how uncomfortable. Now, to have luxury, you must have money. And Mark, in age as in youth, always wanted money, whether from mines in Nevada, or from huge books sold by huge subscription, or from strange and surprising inventions that were bound to revolutionize the world and bring in multimillions. He always wanted money, though rivers of it ran in to him—and ran out again. He spent it, he gave it away, he never had it, he always wanted it."

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OF Mark Twain's permanent place in letters, Mr. Bradford says: "It is on this lack of depth and feeling that I base my reluctance to class Mark with the greatest comic writers of the world. His thought was bitter because it was shallow; it did not go deep enough to get the humble tolerance, the vast self-distrust that should go with a dissolving vision of the foundations of the individual universe. His writing alternates from the violence of unmeaning laughter to the harshness of satire that has no laughter in it. In this he resembles Moliere, whose Scapins are as far from reflection as are his Tartuffes from gayety. And Mark's place is rather with the bitter satirists, Moliere, Ben Jonson, Swift, than with the great, broad, sunshiny laughers, Lamb, Cervantes and the golden comedy of Shakespeare. Indeed, no one word indicates better the lack I mean in Mark than 'sunshine.' You may praise his work in many ways; but could any one ever call it merry? He can give you at all times a riotous outburst of convulsive cachinnation. He cannot give you merriment, sunshine, pure and lasting joy. And these are always the enduring elements of the highest comedy."

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WITH Whistler, Mr. Bradford finds that the problem is to reconcile a great artist with a little man; or, if not a little man, an odd man, an eccentric man, a curious, furious creature. "He was glorified by his hand and damned by his tongue." To quote at length: "Everywhere with Whistler there is the intense determination of the child to occupy the center of the stage, no matter who is relegated to the wings. There is the sharp, vivid laugh, the screaming 'Ha! Ha!'—a terror to his enemies, and something of a terror to his friends also. Not a bit of real merriment in it, but a trumpet assertion of Whistler's presence and omnipresence. There is the extraordinary preoccupation with his own physical personality. In some respects no doubt he was handsome. A good authority declares that in early youth he must have been 'a pocket Apollo.' At any rate, to use his pet word, he was always 'amazing.' The white lock, whether he came by it by inheritance or accident, what an ensign it was to blaze out the coming of the Master. Just so Tom Sawyer triumphed in his deleted front tooth."

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LIKE Poe, Whistler was a liar. Like Poe, his particular lies had to do with his age and his birthplace. Poe was born in Boston, and his early poem, "Tamerlane," was published as: "By a Bostonian." But in later life he denied Boston, claiming other cities as his birthplace. Baltimore was his favorite. It was also one of Whistler's favorites. In fact, Whistler was born in Lowell. "He did not like it, would have preferred his mother's Southern dwelling place, and sometimes implied he was born in Baltimore. He declared in court that he was born in St. Petersburg. He once said to an inquisitive model: 'My child, I never was born. I came from on high'; and the model answered, with a frivolous impertinence that charmed him: 'I should say you came from below.' He was as reticent about his age as he was about his birthplace."

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"HOW I should like to get some glimpse of Henry James in love!" exclaims Mr. Bradford. "But this side of his life is completely hidden from us. He makes no allusion to it in the autobiography, and there is no hint of it in his letters. Yet his novels are saturated with love, contain, in fact, little or nothing else, though it is love quintescenced and alembicated till it hardly knows itself. One would suppose that there was plenty of it in his life. And his love letters would have been one of the curiosities of literature. Fancy the subtleties, the spiritual doublings, the harassing doubts and questions and qualifications! Yet this may be all wrong, and actual, absorbing love might have simplified and clarified his soul beyond anything else on earth. Who can say? Unless some woman still lives who has some of those letters. All that comes to us is the lovely, searching, pathetic suggestion in six words: 'the starved romance of my life.'"

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OF the Southern poet Sidney Lanier: "His large, sunny cheerfulness was infectious, inspired cheerfulness in all about him, even strangers. As one who knew him well said: 'If he took his place in a crowded horse car an exhilarating atmosphere seemed to be introduced by his breezy ways.' Or, as he himself expressed it, from the deeper, inner point of view, 'any bitterness is therefore small and unworthy of a poet.' Not but that he had a temper, could feel a poet's fiery indignation at wrong or meanness or injustice, as when he stood up in his place in the middle of an orchestra rehearsal and told the conductor, who had spoken brutally to a young woman at the piano, just what he thought of him. But the temper never hardened into sullenness, never secreted a long grudge or a blighted quarrel. 'I was never able to stay angry in my life.' He liked to share his pleasures with his friends, too. He recognized that music is the eminently social art, and entered with a splendid, ardent zest into the common enjoyment of it. He delighted in a fascinating human mixture of tangled diversions. 'Kinsfolk, men friends, women friends, books, music, wine, hunting, fishing, tenpins, chess, eating, mosquitoless sleeping, mountain scenery and a month of idleness.'"

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LAST week announcement was made in this department of the winners in the O. Henry Memorial Award, Prize Stories of 1921. In her introduction to the sixteen stories that make up the volume that is published by Doubleday, Page & Co. Blanche Colton Williams says: "A number of 1921 stories center about a historic character. F. Scott Fitzgerald's 'Tarquin of Cheapside' offers in episode form the motivation of Shakespeare's 'Rape of Lucrece'; Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews parallels her 'The Perfect Tribute' and eulogy of Lincoln with 'His Soul Goes Marching On,' and warm reminiscence of Roosevelt; Fleta Campbell Springer's 'The Role of Madame Ravelle' is apparently a tapestry inweaving the stately figure of Georgette LeBlanc. Ranking highest among these personal narratives, however, is Mildred Cram's 'Stranger Things.' Besides calling up, under the name of Cecil Grimshaw, the irresistible figure of Oscar Wilde the author has created a supernatural tale of challenging intricacy and imaginative genius."

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CONSIDERING the impulses that dominated the short story of 1921, making it different from the short story of other years, Dr. Williams writes: "First, its method of referring to drink, strong drink, marks it of the present year. The setting is frequently that of a foreign country, where prohibition is not yet known; the date of the action may be prior to 1919; or the apology for presence of intoxicating liquors is forthcoming in such statement as 'My cellar is not yet exhausted, you see.' Second, the war is no longer taboo; witness 'The Tribute' and 'His Soul Goes Marching On.' Touched by the patina of time and mellowed through the mellifluence of age, the war now makes an appeal dissimilar to that which caused readers two or three years ago to declare they were 'fed up.' Third, Freudian theories have found organic place in the substance of a story. They have not yet found incorporation in many narratives that preserve short story structure, however—although it is within conceivability that the influence may finally burst the mold and create a new."

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"AGAIN," quoting Dr. Williams, "democracy (in the etymological sense of the word, always, rather than the political) is exemplified in the fiction of 1921 in that the humblest life as well as the highest offers matter for romance. More than in former years, writers seek out the romance that lies in the liver of the average man or woman. Having learned that the Russian story of realism, with emphasis too frequently placed upon the naturalistic and the sordid, is not a vehicle easily adapted to conveying the American product, the American author of sincerity and belief in the possibility of realistic fiction has begun to treat it in romantic fashion, always the approved fashion of the short story in this country. So Harry Anable Kniffin's 'The Tribute' weaves in 1,700 words a legend about the Unknown Soldier and makes emotionally vivid the burial of Tommy Atkins. Commonplace types regarded in the past as insufficiently drab, on the one hand, and insufficiently picturesque on the other are reflected in this new romantic treatment. Sarah Addington's 'Another Cactus Blooms' prophesies color in that hard and prickly plant the provincial teacher at Columbia for a term of graduate work. Humorously and sardonically the college professor is served up in 'The Better Recipe,' by George Boas; the doctorate degree is satirized so bitterly by Sinclair Lewis in 'The Post-Mortem' as to challenge wonder, though so subtly as to escape all save the initiated."

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A WORD about the man to whose high talent (why not bluntly say genius?) this award is a tribute. Almost twelve years have passed since William Sidney Porter said, "Pull up the shades, I don't want to go home in the dark," and went to sleep. Despite the ephemerality in subject of some of his tales, O. Henry's place as a story teller is to-day as high as if not higher than ever before. There is one point on which O. Henry differs from all other short story spinners. If you were to ask ten men each to select his ten favorite tales of Maupassant, or Poe, or Kipling, there would be a general uniformity in the choice. To take Kipling as an example, every list would be reasonably sure to include "The Man Who Would Be King," "The Drums of the Fore and Aft," "The Brushwood Boy" and "The Finest Story in the World." With a hundred different titles possible in the selection not more than fifteen would be likely to be mentioned. It would be much the same with Poe or Maupassant; but not with O. Henry. Eight years ago the writer of these paragraphs arranged a symposium of this kind in the pages of a literary magazine. In the ten lists, each giving ten favorite stories of O. Henry, something like sixty-seven different tales were named. Only one story ("An Unfinished Story") was mentioned in as many as three lists.

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A NEW contribution to the literature about O. Henry is "Letters to Lithopolis," that has just been published by Doubleday, Page & Co. in an edition that is limited to 427 copies, of which 377 are for subscribers in the United States and fifty for subscribers in England. The letters were written by Porter in 1903 and 1907 to Miss Mabel Wagnalls, who had read and been impressed by "Roads of Destiny" and wrote to the author in the care of his publishers. O. Henry's first letter bears the date of June 9, 1903. Now that the unfortunate episodes in Porter's life are generally known, there is no indiscretion in referring to the years spent in the Columbus Penitentiary. But in 1903 Porter was exceedingly reticent on the subject, and it has been said that he even deducted five years from his age, those being the years he did not wish to explain. In his letter to Miss Wagnalls volunteering personal information he said: "Since you have been so good as to speak nicely of my poor wares, I will set down my autobiography. Here goes! Texas cowboy. Lazy. Thought writing stories might be easier than 'busting' bronchos. Came to New York one year ago to earn bread, butter, jam, and possibly asparagus that way. Last week loaned an editor $20. Please pardon the introduction of finances, but I regard the transaction as an imperishable bay. Very few story writers have done that. Not many of them have the money. By the time they get it they know better."

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WE do not know whether J. Aubrey Tyson, the author of "The Scarlet Tanager," is a man or a woman, but we have found the book as adequate and absorbing a detective story as has been published in many months. This is not to suggest that it is in any way literature, or that Capt. George Rennison of the United States Secret Service, who tracks down Seafalcon and his Brotherhood, is a character likely to take a place with such creations of this kind of fiction as Sherlock Holmes, Pere Tabaret, or M. Lecoq. The trouble with most detective stories is that, no matter how ingenious the plot, they are marred by sloppy workmanship. But there is nothing sloppy about "The Scarlet Tanager."

Authors' Works And Their Ways

Gamaliel Bradford, the author of "American Portraits," discussed on this page, was born in Boston in 1863, the eighth in direct descent from Gov. William Bradford of Plymouth Colony. His early life was passed mainly in Wellesley Hills, Mass. After spending a considerable time in Europe he prepared for Harvard College and entered with the class of 1886, but was obliged to give up his studies almost immediately on account of the delicate health which has handicapped him ever since. He married in 1886, and after spending the summer of 1887 in Europe returned to Wellesley Hills, where he has made his home, devoting his time mainly to literary pursuits. His published works include "American Portraits," "A Prophet of Joy," "Portraits of American Women," "Portraits of Women," "Union Portraits," "Confederate Portraits" and "Lee, the American."

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Franklin J. Giddings of Columbia University makes a contribution to the new sociology in "Studies in the Theory of Human Society," which has just been published. After dealing with his subject first on the historical side, Prof. Giddings gives an analytical treatment of order and possibility, social causation, folk ways and State ways, social theory and public policy, and concludes with a synthetic section on pluralistic behavior and further inquiries of sociology.

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"Annals of the Church in Scotland," by Sir Thomas Raleigh, K. C. S. I., is about to be published by the Oxford University Press American Branch. It is a record for the general reader of facts which illustrates the foundation of the church (this includes "any society which honestly claims to connect itself with the society instituted by our Lord and organized by His Apostles"); the growth of Roman ascendancy; the revolt of the Northern nations in the sixteenth century; the attempts to secure uniformity in religion under Protestant form, and the slow transition to what is described as liberty of conscience. At the beginning of the volume are autobiographical notes by Sir Thomas Raleigh and reminiscences of him by Sir Harry R. Reichel.

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Francis Hackett's "The Story of the Irish Nation" is to be published next month, the Century Company announces. It is a history of the Irish by an Irishman, and traces the story of the race in Erin from the earliest times down to and including its establishment as an autonomous state as independent as Canada or Australia. The word "story" in the title emphasizes the fact, say the publishers, that this history was written to be read, and not merely to be catalogued in libraries and occasionally referred to.

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The following story has appeared in several papers: "Shortly before going abroad last year Sinclair Lewis bought a fancy suitcase for his wife. They used it on a week end trip up the Hudson and it was stolen on the train. In it was the manuscript of Lewis's new novel. The real tragedy is that Mr. Lewis did not have a carbon copy."

Messrs. Harcourt, Brace & Co. now announce that the title of Mr. Lewis's new book is "Babbitt"; it is the story of a man, and it will be published next fall. As for the story of the lost manuscript, they say, "Aside from the facts that the stolen suitcase was not one but two, that they were not stolen on a train up the Hudson, U. S. A., but at a station in London, that in neither of them was there a single word of manuscript, notes, or any other literary material, that Mr. Lewis always keeps a carbon copy of everything he writes, and that, finally, when the suitcases were stolen he had completed only a small part of the new novel, 'Babbitt,' the story is a triumph of correct detail."

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One of the most romantic episodes of nineteenth century history is recalled by the report that a clerk working in the Evans Dental School of the University of Pennsylvania has disappeared after making away with several hundred thousands of dollars of the funds of the dental school. The money stolen is that left by Dr. Thomas W. Evans for founding the dental school. Dr. Evans, it will be remembered, was the American dentist of the Empress Eugenie, who amassed his fortune at the court of the Second Empire and who was largely instrumental in the flight of the Empress at the fall of the Napoleonic Government. Dr. Evans's memoirs, "The Second French Empire," appeared immediately after his death and are published by D. Appleton & Co. In Comte Fleury's "Memoirs of the Empress Eugenie," published by the Appletons, there is reference to Dr. Evans.